

College Hiring Outlook Highest in Nearly 10 Years, According to CareerBuilder Survey

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- 37 percent of these employers plan to offer graduates higher pay than last year**

PR Newswire
CHICAGO

CHICAGO, April 21, 2016 /PRNewswire/ --This year's crop of college graduates will find welcoming conditions as they enter the entry-level job market. According to a new survey from CareerBuilder, 67 percent of employers say they plan to hire recent college graduates this year, up from 65 percent last year and the highest outlook since 2007. More than a third (37 percent) plan to offer recent college graduates higher pay than last year, and 27 percent of employers hiring recent college graduates this year will pay a starting salary of \$50,000 or more.

The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder between February 10 and March 17, 2016, and included a representative sample of 2,186 hiring managers and human resource professionals in the private sector across industries and company sizes.

"In addition to an improving economy, we are beginning to see a rising number of retirements, which is creating more room for advancement and creating opportunities for entry-level candidates," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer for CareerBuilder. "But just because there are vacancies doesn't mean college students are always ready to fill them."

While prospects appear better, some employers are concerned that new college grads may not be ready for the real world. Twenty-four percent do not feel academic institutions are adequately preparing students for roles needed within their organizations, an increase from 21 percent last year. When asked where academic institutions fall short, these employers cited the following concerns:

- Too much emphasis on book learning instead of real-world learning: 47 percent
- I need workers with a blend of technical skills and those skills gained from liberal arts: 39 percent
- Entry-level roles within my organization are more complex today: 25 percent
- Not enough focus on internships: 13 percent
- Technology is changing too quickly for an academic environment to keep up: 13 percent
- Not enough students are graduating with the degrees my company needs: 11 percent

When asked to name which skills they think recent college graduates lack for the workplace, most of these employers cited interpersonal or people (52 percent) or problem-solving skills (48 percent). Other skills these employers stated include:

- Leadership: 42 percent
- Teamwork: 39 percent
- Written communication: 37 percent
- Oral communication: 37 percent
- Creative thinking: 35 percent
- Project management: 27 percent
- Research and analysis: 17 percent
- Math: 15 percent
- Computer and technical: 14 percent

College Majors That Will Get You a Job

Demand for students with business and technical majors continues to be high among employers with employers stating the following majors are the most in-demand at their firms:

- Business – 35 percent
- Computer and Information Sciences – 23 percent
- Engineering – 18 percent
- Math and Statistics – 15 percent
- Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences – 14 percent
- Communications Technologies – 11 percent
- Engineering Technologies – 11 percent
- Communication and Journalism – 8 percent
- Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities – 7 percent
- Science Technologies – 7 percent
- Social Sciences – 6 percent
- Biological and Biomedical Sciences – 6 percent
- Architecture and Planning – 6 percent
- Education – 5 percent

Information technology (27 percent) and customer service jobs (26 percent) top the list of position types for which employers hiring recent college grads are recruiting. Opportunities also abound in finance/accounting (19 percent), business development (19 percent) and sales (17 percent).

What the Average Grad Makes Right Out of College

When it comes to pay, more than a third of employers who plan to hire recent college graduates this year (37 percent) will offer higher starting salaries than they did last year. Fifty-three percent expect no change in salary offers, and 11 percent expect a decrease in starting salaries.

More than half of these employers (52 percent) say they will make offers to students before they graduate. Expected starting salaries for recent graduates break down as follows:

- Under \$30,000: 25 percent
- \$30,000 to less than \$40,000: 28 percent
- \$40,000 to less than \$50,000: 20 percent
- \$50,000 and higher: 27 percent

These numbers are subject to change: The majority of employers (67 percent) say they are willing to negotiate salary offers when extending a job offer to a recent college graduate.

The New Graduate's Guide to Job Searching

If you want to land a full-time gig so you won't have to move back in with mom and dad, try following these tips for a successful first-time job search:

Check out your school's career services office: Career Services offices typically are little used by students, except as a place to meet recruiters for interviews. But they have much more to offer, including research materials, advice on job training and connections to local companies.

Join a company's talent network: Talent networks keep you automatically informed of new positions opening up that may be a fit for your skills and interests.

Make social a priority: Follow companies you like on social media and engage with them. Consider starting a blog that is related to your career interests.

While on social channels, make sure you clean up your own digital dirt. Nothing is truly private on the Web, and it would be a shame to miss out on a job opportunity because of some embarrassing photos from years ago. Also make sure your profile is relevant. Think through the eyes of a recruiter and keep your employment history and education updated.

Join professional associations: Look for local chapters of professional associations dedicated to the occupations and areas in which you majored or completed studies. Not only are professional associations a great networking opportunity, they may also have an exclusive job posting board or a directory of member companies you can access. Most associations also offer student discounts or discounts for the unemployed.

Stay connected with alumni: Find your alma mater's local alumni association and join it. Use your alumni network to gain information or access to hiring managers in departments of your target companies to give you the widest reach.

Keep your eye on job boards: Job boards have opportunities for all experience levels, including recent grads, and if you're serious about landing a good job, you need to dedicate time to the search. Make a list of the locations and companies where you'd like to work. Then expand your search to include other related job titles in those companies and locations.

CareerBuilder recently created two features – Application View Notification and Resume View Notification – to give job seekers registered on CareerBuilder.com more transparency into the job search process.

With Application View Notification, you can check application views by logging on to their account and viewing their Competition Report. You will also receive an email whenever an employer views your application, so you know in real-time when companies are taking notice of your materials.

With Resume View Notification, when you navigate to your homepage you can see the number of times your resumes has been viewed, the frequency in which your resumes has come up in company searches, and the amount of jobs you've applied to and saved.

Attend job-hunting events: Even if you do not see any specific employers that excite you in an upcoming career fair on campus, attend it anyway — to practice your elevator speech and gain confidence in speaking with recruiters. A career fair may also lend itself to developing additional networking contacts.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,186 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between February 10 and March 17, 2016 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,186, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 2.10 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

About CareerBuilder®

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